

California Department of Education

**Report to the Governor, the Legislature, and
the Legislative Analyst's Office:**

California's Race to the Top — Early Learning Challenge Grant Report



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**Child Development Division
Instruction and Learning Support Branch**

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California Department of Education

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Executive Summary

This report is required by Item 6110-200-0890, Provision 3 of Section 2.00 of the Budget Act of 2012. The California Department of Education (CDE) is required to submit a report to the fiscal committees of the Legislature and the Governor's Administration on the State and local activities undertaken with the Race to the Top — Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant funds each year.

This report provides an update on the 2012 Federal RTT-ELC grant activities. The objective of RTT-ELC is to improve the quality of early learning programs and close the achievement gap for children with high needs. RTT-ELC is organized around five key areas of reform: (1) Successful State Systems; (2) High-Quality, Accountable Programs; (3) Promoting Early Learning Development Outcomes for Children; (4) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (5) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

California was a successful competitor and received a grant of \$52.6 million over four years (January 2012 through December 2015). California is implementing a unique approach that builds upon local and statewide successes to create sustainable capacity at the local level and address the geographic and cultural diversity of the state. To achieve its ambitious goal, California is using the majority of the funding to support the development and expansion of successful local quality improvement efforts led by a voluntary network of 17 Regional Leadership Consortia (Consortia) in 16 counties that are operating or developing a local Quality Rating and Improvement System or quality improvement system and allocating local resources to the efforts.

In addition, California is using a portion of the RTT-ELC grant funds to make several one-time investments in State capacity via nine projects. These investments support the major RTT-ELC reform areas as well as providing additional resources for the Consortia and the state as a whole. During the four-year grant period, the CDE will be the RTT-ELC lead agency for California.

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You can find this report on the RTT-ELC Legislative Reports Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/rt/rttelclegreports.asp>. If you need a copy of this report, please contact Simon Marquez, Associate Governmental Program Analyst, Child Development Division, by phone at 916-319-0625 or by e-mail at smarquez@cde.ca.gov.

California Race to the Top — Early Learning Challenge Grant Report

Introduction

Based on the robust body of research demonstrating that high-quality early learning and development programs can improve young children's health and social, emotional, and cognitive outcomes; enhance school readiness; and help close the wide school readiness gap, the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services released the RTT-ELC application on August 23, 2011. A total of 37 RTT-ELC grant applications were submitted and California was one of nine winning states. California requested \$100 million and was awarded \$52.6 million. The CDE is the lead fiscal agency.

The objective of the RTT-ELC program is to improve the quality of early learning programs and close the achievement gap for children with high needs, defined in the Federal application as:

Children from birth through kindergarten entry who are from low-income families or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, including children who have disabilities or developmental delays; who are English learners; who reside on "Indian lands" as that term is defined by section 8013(6) of the ESEA; who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care; and other children as identified by the State.

To address this school readiness gap, the grant identified high priorities for both strengthening the quality of early learning and development programs and increasing access to them, especially for children with high needs. The RTT-ELC is organized around five key areas of reform: (1) Successful State Systems; (2) High-Quality, Accountable Programs; (3) Promoting Early Learning Development Outcomes for Children; (4) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce; and (5) Measuring Outcomes and Progress.

California's RTT-ELC grant implements a unique approach that builds upon California's local and statewide successes to create sustainable capacity at the local level to meet the needs of our early learners (from birth to age five) with a focus on those with the highest needs. As directed and approved by the Governor, California's plan supports a locally driven quality improvement process that builds upon existing local and statewide successes and investment while creating sustainable capacity at the local level.

Approximately 74 percent of California's RTT-ELC total grant funding is spent at the local level to support a voluntary network of early learning programs. Each county in the network, known as the Regional Leadership Consortia (Consortia), is led by an established organization that is already operating or developing a Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). The Consortia includes 17 members in 16 counties (Alameda, Contra Costa, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Merced, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Joaquin, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, Ventura, and Yolo). The number of children under five years of age in these counties is

approximately 1.9 million, which represents almost 70 percent of the total children birth to five in California.

In addition, California will use a portion of the RTT-ELC grant funds to make several one-time investments in State capacity. The RTT-ELC projects are in four of the five key reform areas and include:

- Reform Area II:
 - **Regional Leadership Consortia (\$39,000,000)**
Implement a locally driven approach that builds upon current quality improvement efforts and investments, brings together organizations in their regions with the same goal of improving the quality of early learning, and expands their current areas of impact by inviting other programs to join their local QRIS or by reaching out to mentor other communities.
 - **California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Community Care Licensing Division (CCL) Web site (\$1,000,000)**
Enhance the CDSS CCL Web site to include educational and training materials for consumers and child care providers.
 - **Evaluation (\$3,000,000)**
Conduct a validation evaluation of the Consortia's local QRISs and assess the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.
- Reform Area III:
 - **Electronic Training Materials on Existing Content (\$665,708)**
Develop online overviews of the Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations and the Preschool Learning Foundations and their respective Frameworks and of the Environment Rating Scales (ERS).
 - **Screening Tool Training and Distribution (\$320,000)**
Provide "Ages and Stages" screening tools and materials for training to local Consortia members for distribution to programs participating in their local QRIS.
 - **California Collaborative for the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CCSEFEL) (\$3,238,816)**
Create a Web-based overview of the CCSEFEL Teaching Pyramid, build a network of regional CCSEFEL trainers and coaches, and support and expand implementation of the CCSEFEL Teaching Pyramid to fidelity in interested sites in the local consortia.
 - **Home Visiting (\$690,000)**
Provide training to California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) local

California Home Visiting Program staff on implementing the Program for Infant/Toddler Care (PITC) practices and on the “Three R’s of Early Childhood: Relationships, Resilience, and Readiness” (Three R’s) models and support module development of the Three R’s focused on home visiting.

- **California Department of Developmental Services (CDDS), Comprehensive System of Personnel Development for Early Start (\$1,000,000)**
Provide coordinated training for early intervention program staff and support implementation of best practices in developmental and health screening at the local level in collaboration with the Consortia.
- Reform Area IV:
 - **Curricula Development for Higher Education (\$750,000)**
Facilitate and coordinate unit-based course alignment for three child development content areas: infant/toddler, children with special needs, and program administration.
 - **Program Administration Scale (PAS)/Business Administration Scale (BAS) Training (\$24,000)**
Provide “train-the-trainer” instruction on PAS and BAS tools to Director Mentors and Family Child Care Home Mentors to support administrative technical assistance to centers and family child care homes participating in the local QRISs.
- Reform Area V:
 - **Connecting Kindergarten Entry Data (\$777,487)**
Ensure that kindergarten entry assessment information, namely the Desired Results Developmental Profile — School Readiness (DRDP-SR) results, can be connected to the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System.

The end goal that unites the Consortia and the State’s one-time investment activities is to ensure that children in California have access to high-quality programs so that they thrive in their early learning settings and succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

RTT-ELC Reform Area I: Successful State Systems

As required by the grant, California continues to demonstrate commitment to and investment in services for children, especially those with high needs. The goal is to have coordinated and streamlined services for children from birth to age five focusing on the needs of the whole child and their families. To achieve this goal, California created a governance structure that brought together the appropriate State agencies, local partners, and staff of the lead agency to assure successful administration of the grant.

As the lead agency, the CDE established a RTT-ELC Implementation Team within the Child Development Division. The Implementation Team leads the overall grant administration and ensures all Federal reporting requirements are met, such as monitoring all contracts related to grant projects and updating scopes of work. The largest portion of the team's work is directed toward supporting the Consortia.

The Implementation Team also collaborates with the five Participating State Agencies (PSAs) for the purpose of streamlining and coordinating program services to children. The PSAs are (1) the California State Board of Education; (2) the CDDS; (3) the CDSS; (4) the CDPH; and (5) First 5 California. Each PSA entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the CDE that included a scope of work describing its support and involvement in fulfilling its related RTT-ELC work. Two of the PSAs, the CDSS and the CDDS, each received \$1 million of RTT-ELC grant funds to implement their work. Another PSA, the CDPH, received direct support through two training projects for their California Home Visiting Program: The PITC and the Three R's. First 5 California provides in-kind resources to support its scope of work of promoting and aligning services to the targeted population of children.

California's newly reconstituted State Advisory Council on Early Learning and Care also participates in supporting the grant. The 12 Governor-appointed members represent a broad range of agencies and organizations, including social services, physical and mental health, and higher education. The co-chairs represent the CDE and the CDSS. Two of the members are leaders in their local consortia participating in the RTT-ELC. The State Advisory Council receives regular updates on the RTT-ELC with opportunities to provide input throughout the life of the grant.

As part of the successful State system, California partnered with 17 leading regional organizations that were operating or developing a local QRIS or quality improvement system and utilizing their own resources to participate in this new opportunity for California. The Consortia includes the following:

California County	Administering Agency
Alameda County	First 5 Alameda
Contra Costa County	First 5 Contra Costa
El Dorado County	First 5 El Dorado
Fresno County	Fresno County Office of Education
Los Angeles County	Los Angeles County Office of Child Care
Los Angeles County	Los Angeles Universal Preschool
Merced County	Merced County Office of Education
Orange County	Orange County Office of Education
Sacramento County	Sacramento County Office of Education
San Diego County	First 5 San Diego
San Francisco County	First 5 San Francisco
San Joaquin County	First 5 San Joaquin
Santa Barbara County	First 5 Santa Barbara
Santa Clara County	First 5 Santa Clara
Santa Cruz County	First 5 Santa Cruz

Ventura County	First 5 Ventura
Yolo County	First 5 Yolo

RTT-ELC Reform Area II: High-Quality, Accountable Programs

As required in the Federal application, California seeks to promote school readiness for children with high needs. More specifically, State applicants were directed to build systems that increase the quality of early learning and development programs for children with high needs so they enter kindergarten prepared. The Federal application directed that this be accomplished by integrating and aligning resources and policies across participating State agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide tiered QRIS. Note: California is implementing a local QRIS model.

The Federal application defines a tiered QRIS as:

The system through which the State uses a set of progressively higher Program Standards to evaluate the quality of an Early Learning and Development Program and to support program improvement. A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System consists of four components: (a) tiered Program Standards with multiple rating categories that clearly and meaningfully differentiate program quality levels; (b) monitoring to evaluate program quality based on the Program Standards; (c) supports to help programs meet progressively higher standards (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial support); and (d) program quality ratings that are publically available; and includes a process for validating the system.

Quality Continuum Framework

To meet California's diverse needs, the RTT-ELC grant implements a locally driven approach that builds upon current quality improvement efforts and investments. California identified multiple research-based common elements of a high-quality QRIS and created a Quality Continuum Framework (Framework) that can be used by communities throughout the state. The Framework includes common, research-based elements, tools, and resources grouped into three core areas: (1) Child Development and School Readiness, (2) Teachers and Teaching, and (3) Program and Environment. This Framework is being implemented in the Consortia and is designed to both evaluate early learning programs based on scientific early childhood research and provide a quality improvement pathway.

After receiving the RTT-ELC grant award, California signed a Federal assurance agreeing to implement a minimum of two common tiers across the Consortia. To ensure access and participation by all interested early learning programs, California's application stated that the base, or first tier, of each local system would start at California's Title 22 CDSS child care licensing standards. The Consortia decided to develop two common tiers in addition to the entry tier, for a total of three common tiers, which took most of 2012 to design. The RTT-ELC Consortia QRIS includes the Three

Common Tiers and two locally defined tiers for a total of five tiers. In sequence, California's structure is as follows:

- Tier 1 — Common (California's Title 22 CDSS licensing standards)
- Tier 2 — *Locally determined*
- Tier 3 — Common
- Tier 4 — Common
- Tier 5 — *Locally determined*

In order to ensure maximum flexibility and recognize diverse areas of quality, the Consortia ultimately chose a points-based hybrid rating system approach¹ and developed and approved the RTT-ELC Quality Continuum Framework Consortia Hybrid Matrix with Three Common Tiers (Hybrid Matrix or QRIS) in September 2012. The initial block rating system had up to 16 elements to be rated. The Consortia streamlined the elements/indicators for rating to focus on the "few and powerful" (5 to 7) and moved approximately half of the initial rated elements from the Framework out of the Hybrid Matrix into the newly created corresponding Quality Improvement and Professional Development Pathways (Pathways).

The table below illustrates the elements and resources included in each core area in the QRIS.

Rated Elements/Indicators (in the Hybrid Matrix)	Quality Improvement and Professional Development/Resources (in the Pathways)
CORE I: Child Development and School Readiness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Observational Assessments • Developmental and Health Screenings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant/Toddler and Preschool Learning Foundations and Curriculum Frameworks • California Collaborative for the Social-Emotional Foundations of Early Learning (CCSEFEL) • Health and Nutrition (United States Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Food Program), physical education/activity, and tobacco cessation training
CORE II: Teachers and Teaching	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead Teacher/Family Child Care Homes Owner Education and Professional Development • Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Growth Plan • CLASS or PITC Program Assessment Rating Scale
CORE III: Program and Environment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Rating Scales (ERS) • Ratios and group size (Centers only) • Director Qualifications and professional development (Centers only) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PAS or BAS • Family Engagement

¹ For more information on a hybrid system approach, see Appendix A: Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Rating Structures.

This streamlining allowed the Consortia to prioritize research-based tools that demonstrate improved child outcomes (e.g., the CLASS) and narrow the Hybrid Matrix to include only seven rated elements for center-based sites and five rated elements for family child care homes (FCCH). By moving some of the elements into the Pathways, they then become part of the participating program's quality improvement plan and each consortium's continuous program improvement process rather than being rated items. This allows the Consortia to narrow the QRIS focus on the "R" in the rating and still have resources to dedicate to the corresponding "I" for improvement.

The Consortia solicited local community feedback on the hybrid model by engaging them numerous times, which built consensus and support for the streamlined Three Common Tiers as well as the locally determined tiers. Many consortia stated their excitement with the end product and were pleased that local stakeholders could see their feedback reflected in the creation of a "more solid, practical QRIS."

Local QRIS Implementation

To design the most effective, locally-driven QRIS with the Three Common Tiers required the Consortia members to meet frequently throughout 2012 to determine the approach, structure, and rating elements. In 2013, the Consortia will actively increase program implementation by increasing the number of participating providers serving children with high needs receiving quality ratings.

In total, the Consortia rated 21 sites and engaged 652 sites for full enrollment in 2013. Engaged programs include those sites participating in the QRIS at various levels of involvement, including programs receiving only quality improvement resources prior to a rating, those that have not yet completed rating activities, and those sites that have been fully rated. Sites engaged in the local QRIS include a variety of program funding types, including California State Preschool Programs; General Child Care Programs; Early Head Start, Head Start, Migrant, and Tribal Programs; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, Child Care and Development Fund; and Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

The Consortia are using a variety of strategies to ensure measureable progress in local QRIS participating sites. All local Consortia are creating an easily accessible and streamlined program that seeks to make participation a positive experience and strives to engage and provide outreach to sites using trusted staff with established relationships with local providers.

Besides the significant progress made in the area of the Hybrid Matrix, progress was made at the local level in developing local QRIS databases, outreach and engagement of sites, launching orientation sessions and communication regarding the QRIS, conducting program and classroom baseline assessments based on the QRIS, launching initial training and technical assistance, fully integrating local quality improvement and workforce development funding streams, and forging relationships with institutes of higher education with expanded course offerings being explored.

The Consortia are also engaging a broad array of stakeholders in the introduction and development of their local QRIS. They convened extensive and inclusive community consortia meetings and brought together all the stakeholders who operate existing quality enhancement programs, providers and parents who use those programs, and other community agencies. In addition, consortia have actively increased involvement to include representatives from more unique partners such as business community members (e.g., the Southern California Gas Company and the San Diego Economic Development Corporation), the League of Women Voters, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

At the heart of California's unique plan is the development of the network of consortia around the state, support for their quality improvement efforts, and dissemination of the results of these efforts. For the quality improvement goals and activities identified in California's application, the consortia serve as leaders and innovators that in turn serve as models and mentors for other counties and regions. The strength of this grassroots approach to quality improvement lies in its focus on empowering communities to develop improvement strategies for early learning that are rooted in the concrete circumstances of their local region and to mentor neighboring consortia, while also addressing shared common standards. Within this first initial year of RTT-ELC implementation, neighboring counties and other partners have reached out to the Consortia and participated in local QRIS events.

In order to help early learning providers, parents, and the public gain a better understanding of licensing and the components of high-quality care, the State will ensure greater access to information and resources. Using RTT-ELC grant funding, the CDSS Child Care and Development Fund will take the opportunity to expand its current Web site to provide important licensing information to parents and professional development opportunities to providers.²

Leveraging and Aligning with Other Efforts

California's application proposed that RTT-ELC funds would be used as a one-time investment to attract and leverage new private investors to build on the existing early learning infrastructure. In the first year of implementation, the Consortia had some initial success with this and great success with leveraging and aligning existing funds. In future years, the Consortia will focus more deeply on actively attracting additional funds as a means to support sustainability of their RTT-ELC work and to increase overall investments in early education.

In 2012, several consortia and related partners obtained foundation funds to directly support their local QRIS, support aligned quality improvement and early childhood health efforts, or support broader advocacy efforts. In recognition of their RTT-ELC

² RTT-ELC funded project.

participation, some local consortia received additional grants or other awards from entities such as the Boeing Charitable Trust and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

One of the successes to date is the unprecedented opportunity RTT-ELC provides to refocus existing public and private investments on evidence-based and promising practices. In essence, California's RTT-ELC has created an umbrella for other quality improvement and funding efforts. With the QRIS Framework and the RTT-ELC goals and objectives, independent projects have aligned themselves with the overarching program quality improvement system and are beginning to build upon each other as a cohesive whole.

Evaluation

The RTT-ELC grant requires that grantees validate the effectiveness of the QRIS and assess the impact of improved ratings on child outcomes. A Request for Proposal to secure an independent external evaluator to perform a Consortia-wide evaluation is currently in development.³ The evaluator will propose a rigorous research methodology and study design to address a comprehensive set of research questions.

Broadly, the evaluation will accomplish the following:

- Assess the validity and reliability of the Hybrid Matrix and determine if the tiers accurately reflect differential levels of program quality.
- Assess the extent to which the local QRIS Technical Assistance and quality improvement activities improve program quality.
- Assess which core elements and framework tools used in the QRIS ratings are most associated with successful outcomes and progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

The objective is to gain deeper insight into what elements make the greatest impact on improving quality and are associated with improved children's school readiness and overall development. The evaluation will also document what is and what isn't working to help Consortia programs and other peer programs strengthen their practices and help improve technical assistance offerings. After the validation analysis is complete, the evaluator will offer recommendations and any suggested modifications to the QRIS as part of a continuous improvement approach.

RTT-ELC Reform Area III: Promoting Access to High-Quality Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs

California addressed this reform area with the knowledge that prioritization of State resources to early learning and development programs committed to a continuous

³ RTT-ELC funded project.

program improvement process will accelerate individual program advancement toward higher quality. This strategy will help move California further toward the goal of improved school readiness for children. Specifically, California chose to focus on two priorities: (1) development and use of statewide, high-quality early learning and development standards; and (2) addressing children's health, behavioral, and developmental needs.

Early Learning and Development Standards

The CDE has completed its entire series of Early Learning and Development Standards. These are found in the Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations (social-emotional development, language development, cognitive development, and perceptual and motor development) and the Preschool Learning Foundations (social-emotional development, language and literacy development, English language development, mathematics, history/social science, science, visual and performing arts, physical development, and health). The Foundations were written based on current research and are attentive to developmental, cultural, and linguistic diversity.

As part of California's RTT-ELC Framework, the Consortia incorporated the Foundations into the Pathways. The Pathways include the online training modules of the Foundations that are being developed with RTT-ELC funds.⁴ The modules will provide an overview and understanding of each of the Foundations' domains. The Pathways also include two of California's Child Care and Development Fund Quality Improvement professional development providers, the PITC and the California Preschool Instructional Network, to conduct training on the State's Foundations.

Health Promotion

Developmental information related to health can be found in the Infant/Toddler Learning and Development Foundations and the Preschool Learning Foundations. The Preschool Foundations have three Physical Development strands which cover fundamental movement skills, perceptual-motor skills and movement skills, and active physical play. Health habits, safety, and nutrition are covered in the Preschool Foundations. Both the Infant/Toddler and Preschool Foundations also address social-emotional development. Professional development on health standards, including the Foundations, is accessible in a variety of ways including Web-based and in-person training. An online overview in both English and Spanish of the ERS, which rates programs on several items including health and safety, is also being developed using RTT-ELC funds.⁵

⁴ RTT-ELC funded project.

⁵ RTT-ELC funded project.

Health, including screening, is also incorporated into the local consortia's QRIS through both rated and quality improvement and professional development elements in the following ways:

- Community Care Licensing as Tier 1 (health, safety, and nutrition)
- ERS (health and safety)
- CLASS (social-emotional)
- Screening, both developmental (social-emotional) and health
- Child Observation
- CCSEFEL (social-emotional)
- Health and Nutrition (nutrition and physical activity)
- Early Learning Foundations and Frameworks
- Early Childhood Educator Competencies (health, safety, and nutrition)

RTT-ELC is also leveraging various developmental and health screening efforts across the state in order to increase the number of children receiving screening and follow-up. Implementation Team members represent the CDE and the RTT-ELC grant at regular workgroup meetings of the State Interagency Team. The State Interagency Team workgroup is sponsored by the CDPH and focuses on the California Home Visiting Program, which incorporates screening into its program design.

RTT-ELC funds are providing training for Consortia members in all 16 counties to attend train-the-trainer sessions on the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) and ASQ-Social Emotional screening tools.⁶ This training will not only increase the number of children who receive a developmental screening; it will also include a component on providing follow-up and appropriate referrals. As part of this screening effort, the Consortia are being provided with ASQ and ASQ-Social Emotional starter kits in both English and Spanish to distribute to child care providers.

RTT-ELC funds also provide expansion of and support for the CCSEFEL Teaching Pyramid approach within the 17 consortia.⁷ As a result of implementing the Teaching Pyramid framework with fidelity, children will demonstrate greater social competence, emotional literacy, and fewer behavior challenges. This project will build a network of regional CCSEFEL Teaching Pyramid trainers and coaches and support and expand the cadre of local CCSEFEL partner and mentor implementation sites within the Consortia. It will also fund the creation of an online overview of the CCSEFEL Teaching Pyramid as part of the Pathways.

As mentioned previously, RTT-ELC projects also support interagency collaboration with other State agencies. Through the RTT-ELC grant, training will be provided to local California Home Visiting Program staff on implementing PITC practices and on the Three R's models and support module development of the Three R's focused on home

⁶ RTT-ELC funded project.

⁷ RTT-ELC funded project.

visiting. Both training topics will bring a better understanding of early childhood development to home visitors working with high-need families in their homes. Additionally, the CDDS is receiving RTT-ELC grant funds to provide coordinated training for early intervention program staff and supporting implementation of best practices in developmental and health screening at the local level in collaboration with the Consortia.⁸

RTT-ELC Reform Area IV: Early Childhood Education Workforce

The Federal application directed states to support early childhood educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities by providing and expanding access to effective professional development opportunities. This directive fit California's existing infrastructure of support to the early learning workforce with professional development opportunities that are intensive, sustained, and focused on educators' success with children in their programs. Building upon these efforts, California developed additional professional development elements to effectively serve the early learning workforce, increase quality in early learning settings, and in the end, support children's learning and development outcomes.

Supporting Early Childhood Educators

A rubric for mapping the Early Childhood Educator Competencies to coursework and professional development (PD) training activities was a product of the Competencies Integration Project (CIP). Because of the breadth of these competencies, the CIP also created a Web-based Mapping Tool that will assist faculty and PD providers to map their learning objectives to specific competencies. The tool will be ready for broad implementation in August 2013.

California community colleges developed the "Early Childhood/Child Development Lower Division 8" as a common and essential portion of a lower division program of study across participating community colleges. The three-unit courses in the "Lower Division 8"/"Core 8" include Child Growth and Development; Child, Family and Community; Introduction to Curriculum; Principles and Practices of Teaching Young Children; Observation and Assessment; Health, Safety, and Nutrition; Teaching in a Diverse Society; and Practicum. RTT-ELC funds will expand the common early childhood education course content to include three new aligned courses in infants and toddlers, children with special needs, and program administration.⁹

Another RTT-ELC project includes supporting the California Early Childhood Mentor Program to provide trainings on the PAS for its center Director Mentors and BAS

⁸ RTT-ELC funded project.

⁹ RTT-ELC funded project.

trainings for its FCCH mentors.¹⁰ The first series of trainings were completed in 2012 and trained Director and FCCH Mentors to be deployed in the field to improve the administrative skills of early learning and development providers and support the local consortia efforts.

Implementing Policies and Incentives That Promote Professional and Career Advancement

The Consortia are leveraging existing workforce development and incentive programs (Assembly Bill 212, Chapter 547, Statutes of 2000, and Comprehensive Approaches to Raising Educational Standards Plus) to provide financial incentives for professional development, academic advancement, Child Development Permit processing, and career incentive grants. In addition, development of an Early Childhood Educator Competencies-based self-assessment tool kit is underway and will be available for Consortia use for professional growth plans in July 2013.

All consortia have engaged local community colleges and universities as part of their stakeholder groups to gather input from higher education and create stronger linkages. In addition, 10 consortia have established or are developing local cohort models for degree attainment, general education, or early childhood education content areas. Degree attainment is also promoted in two consortia through locally funded stipends, academic counseling, and increased course offerings in English and Spanish.

RTT-ELC Reform Area V: Measuring Outcomes and Progress

With the Federal application's focused investment area on understanding the status of children's learning and development at kindergarten entry, California was able to capitalize on existing investments strengthening the alignment between preschool and kindergarten, including the valid and reliable observational assessment of individual children's development in key domains of school readiness. This connected assessment information provides preschool and kindergarten teachers, as well as their administrators, with a common platform to measure and plan for children's development, school readiness, and ongoing instructional support.

Kindergarten Entry Assessment

The CDE has developed the DRDP-SR as a Kindergarten Entry Assessment to be utilized by teachers with students during the first two months of kindergarten. The DRDP-SR is a research-based observational tool that includes the domains of language and literacy development, cognition and general knowledge (including early

¹⁰ RTT-ELC funded project.

mathematics and early scientific development), approaches toward learning (including self-regulation), social and emotional development, and English language development. The CDE's assessment partners, WestEd and the U.C. Berkeley Evaluation and Assessment Research Center, are currently developing the measures for physical well-being and motor development (including adaptive skills) under an agreement with the State of Illinois. Validity and reliability testing has been completed, and the DRDP team is currently engaged in a calibration study.

DRDPtech© CLOUD is CDE's software system designed to allow teachers, program administrators, and other designated staff to access DRDP instruments and conduct DRDP assessments via the Internet. DRDPtech© stores the data entered by teachers in a secure database and automatically produces a variety of assessment reports for both individual children and groups of children.

RTT-ELC Expenditures for 2012

In 2012, a total of \$6,922,213 was expended for RTT-ELC grant activities, \$6,458,235 of which was disbursed to the Consortia.

Appendix A: Quality Rating and Improvement Systems Rating Structures

The designs or rating structures used in QRIS typically use one of three approaches: (1) building blocks, (2) points, or (3) some combination of the two.

- **Building block approach**

In this approach, all the standards in each level must be met for programs to move to the next level.

- Pros: ensures a similar quality standard across rated components and clearly identifies those criteria that the QRIS designers believe to be essential for all programs to meet.
- Cons: reduces provider discretion and the costs associated with improving all components, especially if incentives are limited.

- **Point system**

In this approach, every standard is assigned a number of points with a combined score used to determine the quality rating. Each rating level represents a range of possible total scores.

- Pros: allows provider discretion and more pathways to each tier level (quality can improve even with limited resources, which may motivate broader participation), is often more appropriate in a system with limited incentives or resources, and works well as a program improvement strategy (programs can easily see what is needed to improve in each category and have more options for moving to a higher level).
- Cons: creates variation in quality across system components, and more costly changes may not happen.

- **Hybrid or combination approach**

In this approach, a combination of the building block approach and the point system determines program ratings. It attempts to merge the benefits of both the block and the point system approaches. Typically, the first levels are building blocks and the higher levels are earned through a point system.